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## **I. Abstract**

All of Maine's organizations currently addressing the issue of responsible student behavior have agreed to come together as partners through this project, The Character Education Partnership, to help participating Maine school districts design strategies for achieving the character standards set forth in Maine's *Learning Results*, in order to develop effective models from which other districts, statewide can learn. The Department of Education, through Maine's Commission on Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior, will drive the project, with several nationally recognized Maine organizations as State partners: The Maine Department of the Attorney General, the National Center for Student Aspirations, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Hate Violence, and The Institute for Global Ethics.

This project will not simply address existing school climate and student behavior problems, but also will focus on preventing such problems in the future by providing a systemic, proactive approach to the development of character education in the schools, through professional development opportunities, the development of curriculum and assessment tools, and direct student/community development. We will collaborate directly with twelve local or regional partners to implement and assess each school district's customized approach, while actively widening the net of participating districts through outreach (including a website) and the promotion of positive results and effective models. The intended outcome of the project is a self-sustaining network of character education models, actively promoted and supported by the Maine Department of Education, as an integral part of the continuous statewide movement toward both attainment of the State standards embodied in the *Learning Results*, and implementation of the best practices encouraged by Maine's Commission on Secondary Education in *Promising Futures*.

This is designed as a four year project. The standards of ethical and responsible behavior developed by the Commission will provide the cornerstone in the State's efforts to assist our local or regional partners and other interested schools in the development of curriculum, professional development and other training activities that will strengthen their approaches to the teaching of responsible decision-making and behavior.

## II. Narrative

**“Maine has gained a national reputation through the implementation of our *Learning Results*. It is clear that we must now take an important next step by acting on the fourth Guiding Principle of the *Learning Results* to create ‘responsible and involved citizens’ through a Department sponsored, statewide character education initiative.”**

**Duke Albanese, Commissioner, Maine Department of Education**

### **Statutory Requirements**

The Maine Department of Education (the Department) will work through the Commission on Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior (the Commission) to establish the Character Education Partnership. The Commission was authorized by the Maine Legislature in 1999 (See Attachment 1) to “develop statewide standards for responsible and ethical student behavior”. Standards developed by the Commission should ensure that each Maine student will graduate as

**“a responsible and involved citizen who:**

- A. recognizes the power of personal participation to affect a community and demonstrates participation skills;**
- B. understands the importance of accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions;**
- C. knows the means of achieving personal and community health and well-being; and**
- D. recognizes and understands the diverse nature of society.”**

### **Guiding Principle IV *Learning Results***

(See Attachment 2)

In establishing the foundation of the partnership, namely the above-referenced standards, the Commission will solicit public input to guide local districts regarding the adoption of district-wide codes of student conduct. In the course of implementing both the Commission’s work and this broader Character Education Partnership, the Department will seek the involvement of the

State's Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP) and will gather relevant assessment data from a variety of sources, including the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA), as it measures performance in those content areas in the *Learning Results* regarding character education. Throughout the three year project, the Commission will act as a clearinghouse for distribution of information from related programs outside the Department, and that information will be maintained at the Department by means of a "virtual center" (including a website) available to schools statewide as a standing resource.

### **Goals of the Partnership**

Maine's Character Education Partnership will capitalize on Maine's strong tradition of commitment to healthy communities and healthy schools, as well as the growing network of statewide organizations and services that support this tradition. Many Maine communities enthusiastically endorse the development, by schools, of civic and personal values in their K-12 students. The Department, through the Commission on Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior, will support this community priority.

The commitment of nationally respected organizations partnering in this project underscores the Department's commitment and promises significant and far-reaching results, and sustainable systemic change through long term support. This partnership is galvanized by a common dedication to improving school climate and student performance through proactive character education approaches. The partnership is committed to providing technical assistance through a coordinated and collaborative approach that will meet each participating local or regional partner's unique needs while developing a statewide momentum that will inspire other districts to participate.

The Commission's work is buttressed by *Learning Results* legislation requiring all schools to implement curricular and instructional strategies that will help their students attain the skills to become responsible and involved citizens. These skills are specified throughout the *Learning Results*: in Career Preparation, in English Language Arts, in Health and Physical Education, in Mathematics, in Science and Technology and in Social Studies. For example, under Health and Physical Education, communication skills are specified:

*“Students will understand that skillful communication can contribute to better health for them, their families, and the community. Students need effective communication skills to develop and maintain healthy personal relationships. The ability to organize and convey information, beliefs, opinions, and feelings is a skill that can reduce and avoid conflict. Communication skills enable individuals to be advocates for a healthy school, home, workplace and community.”*

Personal and Social Interaction skills are specified as well:

*“Students will demonstrate responsible personal and social behaviors in physical activity settings. Whether working alone, with another individual, or with a group, students engaged in physical activities are expected to demonstrate self respect and consideration of others as they seek to meet a challenge or solve a problem.”*

The State Partners described above share a focus on and a commitment to making ethical values like caring, respect, fairness, responsibility and trustworthiness a pervasive and essential element of Maine's educational approach in grades K-12. Civic virtue and responsible citizenship are the intended outcomes of this comprehensive effort, as is a positive learning environment in which all students develop high aspirations and are equipped to become successful and positive contributors as adults.

### **State Partners**

The Commission will collaborate with four State partners on this project: The Maine Department of the Attorney General (the Civil Rights Team Project), the National Center for Student Aspirations, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Hate Violence, and the Institute for

The Department of the Attorney General: The Civil Rights Team Project

The Maine Department of the Attorney General began The Civil Rights Team Project in 1996. Since its inception, participation has grown from 18 to 122 middle and high schools. Many other schools are on a waiting list to participate. The Civil Rights Team Project was created to build a structure whereby the culture of intolerance and potential for violence within many of our schools can be changed. It is based on the belief that students, teachers and the surrounding community can work together to increase safety in schools and reduce bias-motivated harassment. Teams from each school (3 students per grade plus 1 or 2 faculty advisors) attend a one-day training by the Attorney General's office and then develop a plan to provide education and awareness on issues relating to bias and prejudice. The Attorney General also conducts in-service training for faculty and administrators at the participating schools.

The National Center for Student Aspirations

The National Center for Student Aspirations has gained national and international recognition for its research-based "Eight Conditions" that foster aspirations, and its innovative approach to helping schools and parents obtain and incorporate students' perspective into targeted programs and overall educational reform efforts.

### The Center for the Study and Prevention of Hate Violence

In July 1999 the Trustees of the University of Maine System approved the creation of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Hate Violence at the University of Southern Maine. The Center has three objectives:

- \* Develop and implement hate crime prevention curricula and programs
- \* Coordinate the work of practitioners of hate violence programs with the work of academics and researchers who study the causes and effects of hate violence; and
- \* Develop and encourage increased research, writing, teaching and dialogue on the history, causes and prevention of hate violence.

### The Institute for Global Ethics

The Institute for Global Ethics is an international non-profit membership organization dedicated to elevating public awareness and promoting the discussion of ethics in a global context. This independent, nonsectarian and nonpolitical think tank focuses on ethical activities for corporations, communities and schools. The Institute's education program has been implemented in school districts across the country. It involves a three-phase character education model that is very specifically community-based, but that also equips teachers with the classroom materials and training needed to sustain the program.

These highly respected organizations look forward to joining forces as partners in a coordinated and collaborative approach to needs assessment, professional development and ongoing support in participating school districts across Maine.

## **Local Partners**

The project will target twelve districts or regional consortia of schools where work is already underway on either (1) implementing character education curricula; or (2) professional development; or (3) student/community training and development in character education. These partners will submit local plans that reflect an understanding of, and a commitment to, systemic approaches to long-term change. The plans must evidence a commitment to: providing meaningful planning time for teachers; seeking community involvement; ensuring district-wide and coordinated participation; soliciting direct student input; developing a values-based foundation to all implementation activities; and ensuring frequent, ongoing assessment. Districts who are strong candidates for the project and have made a commitment to it are listed in Appendix 2 (Local Partners).

## **Project Design and Timeline**

This is a four-year project. Activities will include site-based planning and implementation with direct, face-to-face support from Department and State partner personnel; ongoing assessment at a site-based and statewide level; and promotion of the models, tools and ideas developed under the project to new sites so that a continuous expansion is achieved. A system for monitoring, review and recommendation will be established by the Department with the University of Maine, Center for Research and Evaluation, in an effort to ensure continuous review of project data and results, and continuous improvement not only at each site but of the project overall.

### **Year One:**

- **Complete public hearings on developing standards of conduct.** During the first year of the project, the Commission will carry out and report on its work in communities all over Maine. The Commission will hold a series of town meetings in various locations and settings (including schools) across the State to solicit student and community input on the vital issue of character education. In



addition, the Commission will host presentations from related programs, as part of the commitment to establishing and maintaining a current character education clearinghouse as a standing resource for schools statewide.

- **Begin site-based activities.** Simultaneously during year one, project personnel will begin working with local partners to support and aid in the design of three-year strategies for curriculum development, in-service and student and community training and development, classroom-based and/or school wide activities and specific assessment tools related to the goals of the project. These plans and action steps will be coordinated with Maine's *Learning Results* requirements, so that our efforts will compliment, rather than duplicate, local efforts already underway. In addition, where possible this project will coordinate training with schools and educators involved in the Learning in Deed project that is funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and overseen by the Department; this Learning in Deed project aims to incorporate and institutionalize service-learning as a teaching and learning strategy, a goal that complements this character education initiative.
- **Initiate an assessment process.** Statewide and site-specific assessment tools also will be developed and implemented to parallel the goals of the project. Sites will be required to submit assessment plans for all action steps taken, with documentation of outcomes. Project personnel will submit site-based and comprehensive project assessment plans to the University of Maine Center for Research and Evaluation for review, discussion and recommendations. Local site assessments will be compiled with project evaluations in a yearly performance-based report that will be submitted to the Commission and to the United States Department of Education.

## **Year Two:**

- **Expand the reach of the project to new sites.** During the second year, project personnel will actively publicize and promote project results in an effort: (1) to underscore the Department's character education requirements; (2) to encourage the use of successful models and best practices; and (3) to recruit new qualifying sites for the project. Selected qualifying sites may also begin "first year activities" in a tiered action plan of continuous expansion.
- **Continue development of site-based activities.** Project personnel will continue to support the action steps each site has designed for its three-year character education initiative, including both the activities implemented and informed by the first year's assessment and new activities planned for the second year. As noted above, a report describing each site's challenges and progress will be submitted to the Commission and the United States Department of Education in this second year, and will be made available for broad distribution.
- **Develop assessment.** In the second year of the project, assessment will continue and compiled data will begin to be analyzed. Project personnel will ascertain which practices or initiatives show positive results and should be continued, which need some shaping or improvement, and which must be revisited. Early results from all three modes of assessment—site assessment, site self-assessment, and statewide project assessment—will inform decisions and next steps for the project itself, establishing a synergy based on results that will become a permanent feature of each district's character education collaboration with the Department, as well as of the statewide effort as a whole.

### **Year Three:**

- **Continue outreach.** By year three, the Maine Department of Education will have established and publicized statewide a well-known center for educators statewide so that any school or district interested in embarking on character education programming will have access to resources for getting started. This center will be “virtual” and web-based, with a variety of services provided for classroom teachers, administrators and superintendents. Opportunities available through the center will include published curricular materials, bulletin board discussions led and monitored by project personnel, published assessment tools, and training schedules. The center also will publish results from sites that underscore and promote the Department’s standards, and that offer more models, tools and ideas for how to implement effective systemic change in this area of focus.
- **Continue site-based action.** Sites from year one will, by year three, have received the training and established the infrastructure necessary to continue planning, implementing and monitoring practices and initiatives that contribute to positive school climate and values-based reform. Those sites that have particularly exemplified the aspirations of the project will be invited to send representatives to a summer training institute. Maine’s annual Middle School Institute will serve as a model for this. The Middle School Institute invites teams of school personnel to a retreat that involves presentations of best practices from across the State and around the country, as well as planning time to design action plans for the coming school year. Each team attending the conference is required to exit with a complete plan and to implement the plan during the following school year.

**Year Four:**

By the end of the third year, the intent is to have identified a new set of local or regional partners, with even more identified for future recruitment. These new partners will be funded by redirecting grant funds from the State partners to local or regional partners, and by corporate giving.

**Ongoing:**

- **Ongoing synergy and expansion.** A similar summer training institute will become an annual tradition of this project, with successful local partners presenting their model to other interested potential partners, and those potential partners collaborating with the project personnel and current local or regional partners to design plans for the coming school year. This will ensure that the project's momentum is maintained from peer-to-peer, community-to-community, rather than solely through Department personnel. By the third year, many comprehensive character education strategies will be in place and documented across the State, and in each case a continuous loop of data-to-adjustments-to-more-data will be established. These models and the overall results of the project will be publicized and promoted as part of an outreach plan to attract new partners for the project.

**Local Activities**

Local partners must demonstrate that their proposed activities plans satisfy certain requirements that are the hallmarks of any successful local or regional partner's plan. Under this grant, the Department intends to ensure that value is added to what is already underway at each participating local or regional site. Implementation of Maine's Character Education Partnership will look different at each site, in keeping with the community-specific nature of the project.

Here are some examples:

- Old Orchard Beach School District has implemented a K-3 social curriculum that provides a series of ten lessons on responsible student behavior and appropriate social interaction among students and teachers. Participation in this grant will facilitate the expansion of this program across all grade levels.
- School Union 76 is currently working with the National Center for Student Aspirations to develop a student government-led series of student activities, and faculty and staff training to respond to the Centers Statewide Aspirations Survey, and is exploring the development of a K-12 social skills curriculum for the district. Participation in this grant would support both of these activities.
- Orono High School has been involved in service-learning for some time, and participated in a successful three-year service-learning research project carried out by the Institute for Global Ethics. The service-learning initiative revealed a faculty need and interest to broaden and strengthen the ethical critical thinking skills essential for helping high school students become responsible and involved citizens. The Character Education Partnership project will help Orono High School receive the necessary training to effectively integrate critical thinking opportunities across the curriculum, while implementing citizenship-focused service-learning and aspirations projects schoolwide. Orono's middle school and high school staff might bridge and augment these efforts by working with other State partners to implement a peer mentoring program. Project personnel will assist in designing site self-assessment strategies to monitor progress and outcomes.

### **State Assistance to Local Partners**

The Department of Education will be working to supply the information, communication, services and support necessary to successfully carry out each local partner's unique plan. The Maine Department of Education will establish a center for educators statewide, so that any school or district interested in embarking on character education programming will have access to resources for getting started. This center will be "virtual" and web-based, with a variety of services provided for classroom teachers, administrators and superintendents. Opportunities available through the center will include published curricular materials, bulletin board discussions led and monitored by project personnel, published assessment tools, and training schedules. The center will also publish results from local partner sites that underscore and promote the Department's standards, and that will continuously offer models, tools and ideas for how to implement effective systemic change. Efforts will be effectively documented so that non-partnering local districts can understand and learn from the local partners involved in the Character Education Partnership.

### **III. Evaluation Plan**

#### **State and Local Evaluation of Local Programs**

The Department will determine qualified sites for this project based on each site's previously established commitment to values-based reform in the form of documented implemented strategies that have contributed to character education and improved school climate, and documented plans to continue and build on these strategies. The state evaluation plan will identify the value added from these strategies and the long term or sustainable potential of these strategies, as well as the degree of commitment and viability for continuing or expanding them within both a local and a statewide context. Each site will also be required to demonstrate the relevance of proposed activities to Maine's *Learning Results*. The State will design plans to test reasonableness of costs at each site, especially insofar as sustainability is a goal.

Assessment tools to measure local partners' success will include performance indicators like the MEA and local tests, related academic portfolio evidence, anecdotal and narrative written feedback from students and faculty, surveys of faculty, students and community members and focus groups. Evaluation of local partners will also be based on reports related to costs, non-duplication, and sustainability. Each site will be evaluated by project personnel based on specific goals, objectives and outcomes, the plan for measuring them and the timeline for achieving them submitted by the site during Year One of the project. Since these evaluation plans will be performance-based, subsequent reports and independent examination by project personnel will describe the degree to which: (1) outcomes are being achieved in keeping with the original timeline; (2) strategies are being adjusted to more effectively achieve said outcomes; and (3) strategies must be re-examined based on evidence that, as stated, they are unrealistic.

### **Project-Wide Evaluation**

The state evaluation plan will mirror site-based assessment in that it will be performance-based, ongoing, and a vital tool for deciding next steps and shaping the way forward. It will include specific deliverables and measurable outcomes whereby both the project personnel and local participants build on knowledge gained about results of activities undertaken.

Data to determine how well the project is working overall will include results from locally designed site-based assessments, results from independent, state-sponsored assessment of individual sites, the degree of interest and involvement by non-selected, potential sites and how well-informed randomly selected, uninvolved sites seem to be. Both local and project-wide evaluation will be designed to include measurable indicators of progress, ranging from student and district performance on the MEA in the content areas of the *Learning Results* related to character education, to surveys on school climate and the tracking of the frequency of disciplinary incidents, among others.



## **IV. Management Plan**

### **Department Responsibilities**

The Character Education Partnership has the commitment of personnel from each of the nationally recognized State partners. The Department, as the State Educational Agency and the grantee, will be responsible for coordinating the contributions of the State partners and the work of the State partner personnel for the duration of this project. The project director will be responsible for coordinating the State partner contributions with the standards developed by the Commission on Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior and ensuring the development of a series of training modules that will be delivered to the local or regional partners during year one. Two (2) days of on-site training will be provided to each local or regional partner in the area(s) of need unique to that partner. Technical assistance will be available upon request not only to partners but to all schools statewide, on an ongoing basis.

The project director will be responsible, with the Center for Research and Evaluation, for coordinating the evaluation strategies of the State partners with the standards developed by the Commission, and for ensuring the development of site-specific and project-wide evaluation mechanisms. This includes ensuring that targeted technical assistance in the area of self-assessment is provided to the local or regional partners. In addition, the project director will ensure that site visits are made to each of the local or regional partners, as follow-up on both implementation and site self-assessment.

The project director will be responsible for coordinating, with the State partners and the Commission, the annual Summer Institute described earlier in the narrative. Also, the Department will ensure the maintenance and reliability of the website described earlier in the narrative.

**State Assurances Re: Annual Provision of Program Information**

The project director will be responsible for reporting to the Commission and to the State and local partners on a quarterly basis and will provide annual written reports to the Commission and to the United States Department of Education.

## V. Budget

### Budget Narrative

The following is a line-item itemization of Section A, Budget Summary. Lines not listed are self-explanatory.

Line 1: Budgets for a .25 FTE project director; .125 FTE project director in Year 4.

Line 6:

<b>Year</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Local Grants</b>	<b>280,000</b>	<b>175,000</b>	<b>175,000</b>	<b>70,000</b>
Local/Regional Partners	255,000	145,000	145,000	24,000
Local Partners (7)	17,500/each	10,000 (1,000-eval/each)	10,000 (1,000-eval/each)	2,000 (1,000-eval/each)
Regional Partners (5)	27,500	15,000 (1,000-eval/each)	15,000 (1,000-eval/each)	2,000 (1,000-eval/each)
Additional Local 1x grants (5-8)	25,000	30,000 (6-10)	30,000 (6-10)	46,000 (10-15)
<b>State Partners</b>	<b>55,800</b>	<b>44,110</b>	<b>43,225</b>	<b>12,180</b>
Website Development	10,000			
Website Operation	10,000	15,000	15,000	
Training for Local Partners	18,400	12,000	12,600	7,600
Consulting for Local Partners	7,400	7,110	5,625	
Summer Institute (2 annually)	8,000	8,000	8,000	4,580
Development/ Training (State Partners)	5,400	2,000	2,000	

Line 8:

<b>Year</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Publish Commission Report	25,000			
Summer Institutes	10,000	4,000	3,000	2,000
Evaluation		1,000	2,000	3,000

